

Regional Board of Superintendents' Meeting

Northern Rhode Island Collaborative

Main Office

2352 Mendon Road

Cumberland, RI 02864

Minutes

A regular meeting of the Regional Board of Superintendents was held at the Main Office, 2352 Mendon Road, Cumberland, RI 02864, on **Wednesday, November 2, 2005**. The meeting was called to order at 9:10 a.m. by Mr. Robert O'Brien, Chairman.

In addition to Mr. O'Brien, the following board members were present: Dr. D'Acchioli, Dr. Dellith, Ms. Iacovelli, Mr. Lindberg, Dr. Morelle, and Dr. VonVillas, as well as, Julian E. MacDonnell, Jr., Executive Director, Dr. Robert E. Fricklas, Assistant Director, and Craig Enos, Business Manager. Guests: Jennifer Wood and Keith Oliveira of RIDE, Benjamin Scungio, Esq. and Joseph Rotella Esq., Director of Administration, Cumberland School Department.

Mr. O'Brien entertained a motion to approve today's agenda, which was moved by Dr. D'Acchioli and seconded by Dr. Dellith, carried by all.

Routine Matters:

Dr. D'Acchioli motioned to approve Items 1 -4, which was seconded by Dr. Dellith, carried by all.

1.0 The Minutes of the Meeting of October 4, 2005

Moved: Dr. D'Acchioli

Approved:

Ms. Iacovelli

Seconded: Dr. Dellith

Mr. Lindberg

Dr. Morelle

Mr. O'Brien

Dr. VonVillas

2.0 Bills for the month of October 2005

Moved: Dr. D'Acchioli

Approved:

Ms. Iacovelli

Seconded: Dr. Dellith

Mr. Lindberg

Dr. Morelle

Mr. O'Brien

Dr. VonVillas

Communications and Reports:

3.0 Nothing to report.

Appointments:

4.0 Appointment of Michael Grenon, Custodian, pending Pre-Employment Physical

The Executive Director recommended the appointment of Michael Grenon as a Custodian, pending Pre-Employment Physical results.

Moved: Dr. D'Acchioli

Approved: Ms. Iacovelli

Seconded: Dr. Dellith

Mr. Lindberg

Dr. Morelle

Mr. O'Brien

Dr. VonVillas

The Board agreed to take the following agenda item out of order:

Old Business:

10.0 Beacon Charter School - Presentation from Keith Oliveira & Jennifer Wood, RIDE

Mr. O'Brien, Chairman, reported that as discussed at the last meeting, the districts expressed concern with the closing and re-opening of the Beacon Charter School and the impact on their budgets. Mr. Keith Oliveira and Ms. Jennifer Wood from RIDE were invited to today's meeting so that the districts may seek assistance from RIDE.

Ms. Jennifer Wood began by stating that the most heavily impacted district was Woonsocket. Ms. Wood stated that RIDE's position has been consistent in that they were concerned with Beacon's fiscal management and that the school should not operate in the current school year. The issue was brought before the Board of Regents and the school was put through a very vigorous grilling. The Regents overruled the action of the hearing officer continuing the operational charter under new management with Johnson & Wales for new funding and a new emergency plan - takeover status with significant constraints of operation.

Each district in northern Rhode Island is differently impacted. RIDE raised this issue with the Board of Regents and tried to negotiate with the municipalities. The municipalities agreed to fund the deficit in Woonsocket, unfortunately, this has not occurred. RIDE will advocate with the General Assembly for supplemental State aid. There is no statutory claim that RIDE can support district funding statute.

Dr. D'Acchioli expressed concern with the opening of future charter schools and preventing this situation from happening again. He also questioned why RIDE did not say that Beacon did not meet its enrollment target. Ms. Wood stated that this will not happen again. Beacon did not open in the traditional manner. Political forces were at work. Mr. Keith Oliveira advised that regarding the enrollment figure having been met, they need 50% of their target goal; that meets the statute. RIDE did not think they were ready to open, however, they had a legislative champion. They had a successful first year but going into the second year they over-estimated their enrollment.

Dr. Morelle expressed concern with the issue of fiscal management. She indicated that Cumberland also has a significant impact on its budget and they did send correspondence to RIDE on this issue. Ms. Wood advised that RIDE's legal department would send an official response to Dr. Morelle's correspondence. Dr. Morelle advised that Cumberland is receiving invoices from Beacon and they will not pay the invoices. Ms. Wood advised that RIDE will require districts to pay Beacon's invoices.

Ms. Wood indicated there may be relief from supplemental appropriations from the General Assembly.

Mr. O'Brien questioned what can the Collaborative do to have a voice in the legislature. Ms. Wood advised that each community should send correspondence to every member of the legislative delegation.

Mr. Oliveira advised that RIDE will provide a census of the communities' sending students showing the enrollment numbers along with the State and local share. The supplemental aid will happen in June when deliberations occur on the new budget at the end of the fiscal year. RIDE feels this is a special circumstance and they will advocate and request for a one-time corrector. They will make a diligent effort to correct this through the political process to the General Assembly.

Mr. O'Brien stressed that this issue affects the entire State of Rhode Island and that other Superintendents from the area will be watching the results of this case.

(Craig Enos arrived at 9:43 a.m.)

Discussion ensued on how the situation could have been handled differently.

Dr. D'Acchioli commended RIDE for a phenomenal job. Ms. Wood stated that the political process took place after the legal decision had been made. She also advised that Sharon Osborne will send an e-mail to advise the dates of the General Assembly committee meetings.

Mr. O'Brien thanked Ms. Wood and Mr. Oliveira and they left the meeting at 9:57 a.m.

Discussion followed on what the Collaborative can do as a group, such as, writing letters to the Board of Regents and local legislators and possibly having the town councils and school committees write a letter to the governor.

Mr. Joseph Rotella, Director of Administration and Legal Counsel for the Cumberland School Department, expressed his disagreement with Ms. Wood's statements. Attorneys Scungio and Rotella advised that there is legal recourse to challenge this issue.

New Business:

5.0 Non-Union Main Office Staff - Job Description Update

The Executive Director reported that in accordance with the re-organization of personnel, discussed at the August 2005 meeting, and the re-distribution of duties, the Board's approval is requested of the revised job descriptions of the Non-Union Main Office Staff.

<u>Moved:</u>	Dr. D'Acchioli	<u>Approved:</u>	Ms. Iacovelli
<u>Seconded:</u>	Dr. Dellith		Mr. Lindberg
			Dr. Morelle
			Mr. O'Brien
			Dr. VonVillas

6.0 Non-Union Main Office Staff - Salary Adjustments

The Executive Director reported that in accordance with previous discussions during Union contract negotiations and Non-Union salaries, it was mentioned at that time that a review of the Non-Union Main Office salaries would take place. A re-organization of personnel in the Main Office has taken place along with re-distribution of duties and additional responsibilities, and I am, therefore, requesting the Board's approval of my recommended salary adjustments per the attached proposal.

<u>Moved:</u>	Dr. D'Acchioli	<u>Approved:</u>	Ms. Iacovelli
<u>Seconded:</u>	Dr. Dellith		Mr. Lindberg
			Dr. Morelle
			Mr. O'Brien
			Dr. VonVillas

7.0 Long-Term Disability Bid

Mr. Craig Enos, Business Manager, reported that the Collaborative's current long-term disability insurance expires on December 31, 2005. We, therefore, advertised for bids and received six responses. We currently pay 20 cents per \$100 of insured earnings, and the low bid came in at 15 cents per \$100 of insured earnings from The Standard with Blue Chip Financial. We are recommending the Long-Term Disability Insurance Bid be awarded to The Standard/Blue Chip Financial Advisors for a two-year contract.

<u>Moved:</u>	Dr. D'Acchioli	<u>Approved:</u>	Ms. Iacovelli
<u>Seconded:</u>	Dr. Dellith		Mr. Lindberg
			Dr. Morelle
			Mr. O'Brien
			Dr. VonVillas

8.0 Benjamin Scungio, Esq. Presentation

Attorney Ben Scungio distributed information to the Board regarding the recent Commissioner's decision on the Gorman vs. Jamestown School Department case and the impact of this decision regarding districts' hiring of independent contractors. Attorney Scungio reviewed the issues involved with this case, whereas Ms. Gorman was hired as a School Psychologist under a contract on an annual basis from 1990 to 2001. The question was whether Ms. Gorman was eligible for step salary, advances in her salary, and retirement

credits for the years she was employed by Jamestown. The Commissioner decided for Ms. Gorman. Attorney Scungio also reviewed two similar cases regarding the tenure of Certified Occupational Therapist Assistants, Physical Therapists, and Speech Language Pathologists.

Attorney Scungio suggested that the districts develop a policy regarding the hiring of independent contractors in order to minimize their liability. He also suggested a meeting of the districts' Business Managers in which he will assist in identifying the issues and come up with suggestions for the Superintendents. Also discussed was the possibility of hiring independent contractors through the Collaborative.

After discussion, Dr. D'Acchioli made a motion to hire independent contractors through the Northern R.I. Collaborative, which was seconded by Mr. Lindberg, carried by all.

<u>Moved:</u>	Dr. D'Acchioli	<u>Approved:</u>	Dr. Dellith
<u>Seconded:</u>	Mr. Lindberg		Ms. Iacovelli
			Dr. Morelle
			Mr. O'Brien
			Dr. VonVillas

Attorney Scungio advised he would develop guidelines on the hiring of independent contractors.

Old Business:

9.0 Annual Meeting Date

The Executive Director reported that a date for the next Annual Meeting has been selected – March 29, 2006.

<u>Moved:</u>	Dr. D'Acchioli	<u>Approved:</u>	Dr. Dellith
<u>Seconded:</u>	Dr. VonVillas		Ms. Iacovelli
			Mr. Lindberg
			Dr. Morelle
			Mr. O'Brien

Informational Matters:

11.0 Teacher Assistant Network Session - January 2006

The Executive Director distributed information on the next Teacher Assistant Network Session in January 2006.

12.0 EAST Grant Peer Tutorial Update

Dr. Fricklas reported there will be a luncheon meeting on November 17th to discuss the East Grant's Peer Tutorial Program and a preliminary presentation on establishing this program in the districts' schools.

Miscellaneous:

- The Executive Director reported that the next meeting, on December 6, 2005, will focus solely on the land/building issue. Mr. O'Brien suggested a possible change of location for this meeting and also will invite Attorney Ben Scungio to attend.
- Mr. O'Brien reported that he has information on Talk Works with the Looking Glass Theater if anyone is interested.
- As this is Dr. D'Acchioli's last Board meeting, Mr. O'Brien, on behalf of the Board, presented him with a gift and thanked him for his support and many contributions.

Executive Session:

Nothing to report.

With no further information to report, Mr. O'Brien entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:40 a.m., which was moved by Dr. D'Acchioli and seconded by Dr. Dellith, carried by all.

Respectfully submitted,

Debra A. Jannetta